



Connecticut Roundtable on Climate and Jobs

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Testimony in Support of SB 1198

An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the School Indoor Air Quality Working Group

To: Honored Chairs Sen. McCrory and Rep. Currey, Vice Chairs Sen. Winfield and Rep. Leeper, Ranking Members Sen. Berthel and Rep. McCarty, and Distinguished Members of the Education Committee

From: Connecticut Roundtable on Climate and Jobs

On behalf of the Connecticut Roundtable on Climate and Jobs, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 1198, An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the School Indoor Air Quality Working Group.

The Connecticut Roundtable on Climate and Jobs builds alliances among diverse constituencies to combat climate change, create jobs and promote racial, economic, and climate justice. The Roundtable seeks to build a worker-oriented environmental movement committed to securing a fair and just transition to a clean energy economy that protects not only the environment but also the livelihoods of workers and their communities. We strongly believe that carbon-free and healthy schools are essential for a just transition and that SB 1198 can help move Connecticut's public schools in the right direction.

SB 1198 will improve indoor air quality in school buildings by providing funding for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) improvements, establishing parameters for indoor temperature and humidity, and increasing reporting on regular indoor air quality assessments. This is important because Connecticut's children experience asthma at rates higher than the national average and full-time school faculty have among the highest rates of asthma among non-industrial occupations. Poor ventilation, extreme temperatures, dust, mold, rodent infestations, and other hazards in school buildings contribute to asthma, "sick building syndrome," and associated teacher and student absenteeism. This environment makes it difficult for teachers to teach and for students to learn. Further, inadequate climate control during heat waves leads to school cancelation—a costly trend that will only increase with the impacts of climate change.

Regular HVAC maintenance and replacement projects can also significantly improve energy efficiency and reduce our reliance on fossil fuels. This saves districts money and moves the state closer to our greenhouse gas reduction targets. Further, this work will create jobs across the state.

To strengthen the bill, routine walkthrough inspections for indoor air quality hazards should be conducted annually, a schedule that is consistent with the best practices outlined by the EPA's Tools for Schools program and the recommendations of the CT School Indoor Air Quality Working Group. However, reports to the state on these walkthrough inspections do not need to occur annually. Such inspections should be required for all schools, not just those constructed or renovated after January 2003. Additionally, there needs to be a clear start date for inspections required under section 3(2).

Thank you for your consideration of this important bill. We urge the committee to support SB 1198.

Sincerely,

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